

REMARKS

Claims 1-9, 19-27, and 37-45 are pending. Claims 1-9, 19-27, and 37-45 are rejected by this Office Action.

Applicant acknowledges withdrawal of the rejections of claims 1-9, 19-27, and 37-45 under 35 U.S.C. §101, 35 U.S.C. §112 first paragraph, and 35 U.S.C. §112 second paragraph.

Substance of Interview on July 18, 2007

Applicant and Examiner discussed the priority date of the present patent application. Applicant indicated that the cited reference is not prior art because present patent application claimed a priority date of December 22, 1998. Examiner suggested that Applicant file a response to the Office Action providing details supporting Applicant's arguments.

Claims 1-9, 19-27, and 37-45 are rejected by the Office Action under 35 U.S.C. 102b, as allegedly being anticipated by US Patent No. 5,987,443 (Nichols) (dated November 16, 1999).

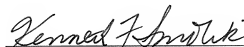
Applicant believes that the rejection under 35 U.S.C. 102b is improper. The present application claims priority to US patent applications 09/219,479, 09/219,481, and 09/221,608, all having a filing date of December 22, 1998, under 35 U.S.C. §120. Nichols was filed on December 22, 1998 (without any priority claim) and was granted on November 16, 1999. Applicant is attaching the filed Declaration of the present patent application, as retrieved from the USPTO Patent Application Information Retrieval system.

Because of the above reasons, Applicant believes that Nichols cannot be considered as prior art and requests reconsideration of claims 1-9, 19-27, and 37-45.

All objections and rejections have been addressed. Hence, it is respectfully submitted that the present application is in condition for allowance, and a notice to that effect is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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